



Squier Affinity Series Starcaster Deluxe

Is it time this electric expanded its cult appeal and became a mainstream blockbuster? Because this is one cool – and affordable – semi

By Chris Gill

THE ORIGINAL STARCASTER, made from 1976 to 1980, was a very cool semi-hollow dual-humbucker electric guitar with the misfortune of Fender’s less-than-stellar late-Seventies quality reputation and a few design quirks like its massive Strat-inspired bridge and misunderstood pickups with CuNiFe magnets.

The Starcaster enjoyed cult pawnshop prize status during the ‘80s and ‘90s until a gaggle of alternative players like Jonny Greenwood (Radiohead), Martin Gore (Depeche Mode) and Chris Walla (Death Cab For Cutie) started playing them and prices went up.

The Starcaster has enjoyed a second life in various iterations, including the short-lived Fender Modern Player version (2014-17) and the ongoing Tom DeLonge signature model.

Now, the more vintage-spec Classic Vibe and the Affinity Series Starcaster Deluxe have truly found their place as affordable Squier models.

Playability

It’s a little different than the average semi-hollow electric thanks to its offset body shape and bolt-on neck with a 25 1/2-inch scale length. The fingerboard has a 9 1/2-inch radius and 22 medium jumbo frets, and the material is laurel on the Olympic White version while the Sienna Sunburst version has a maple fingerboard.

The Affinity Deluxe Starcaster body has all-maple laminate semi-hollow construction with single-layer binding surrounding the arched

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top and back.

The construction quality of Squier guitars is no longer the hit or miss proposition it was decades ago, and our example was shockingly good for an instrument at such a low price point.

Its playability is superb. The laurel fingerboard on our test example looks a little pale and dull, but the wood feels smooth under the fingers – close your eyes and you won’t know it’s not rosewood.

Although the neck is perfectly fine, you could easily bolt on a Strat neck and fool people into thinking that it’s a high-end electric guitar that costs thousands.

The sound quality is impressive, with crisp metallic treble, supple mids and bouncy bass

The Deluxe is equipped with a pair of covered Squier humbuckers with ceramic magnets that deliver punchy output. Controls are stripped down to master volume, master tone and a three-way pickup selector toggle.

The sound quality is impressive, with crisp metallic treble, supple mids and bouncy bass. It accommodates high-gain distortion quite well and sings sweetly with clean and overdriven amp tones.

GUITAR VERDICT



The value that the Squier Affinity Series Starcaster Deluxe offers is through-the-roof for players seeking a first guitar or wanting to add an affordable semi-hollow to their arsenal thanks to its stellar tone and playability.

PROS

- + Attractive styling.
- + Powerful, articulate humbuckers.
- + Outrageously excellent value.

CONS

- Laurel fingerboard on our test example was not as attractive as rosewood.

SPECS

MADE: Indonesia
TYPE: Six-string semi-hollow electric guitar
BODY: Laminated maple with center block
NECK: Maple, bolt-on, C shape
FINGERBOARD: Indian laurel, 9.5” radius
SCALE LENGTH: 25.5”/648mm
NUT/WIDTH: PPS / 42mm
FRETS: 22, medium jumbo
HARDWARE: Die-cast tuners, TOM-style adjustable bridge and stop-tail
ELECTRICS: 2x ceramic humbuckers, volume, tone, 3-way pickup selector
OPTIONS: Sienna Burst with maple fingerboard
LEFT-HANDED OPTIONS: No
FINISHES: Olympic White [as reviewed], Sienna Burst
CASE: No

